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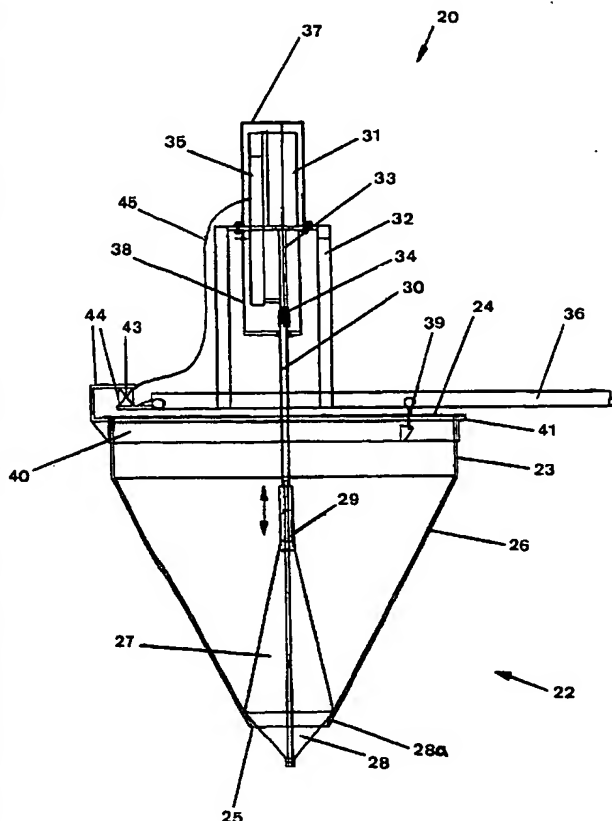
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(54) Title: MATERIAL DISCHARGE APPARATUS AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: This invention relates to a material discharge apparatus (1), method and computer program for controlling the flow rate of flowable material being conveyed through a hopper (2), the apparatus (1) including a hopper (2) having an inlet opening (4) at the top and a discharge outlet (5) at the base of the hopper (2), and a valve means (7) configured and arranged in the hopper, the valve means (7) having a lower end portion adjacent the discharge outlet (5) forming a gap between the hopper and the valve means for material to flow therethrough, the valve means and/or the hopper being adapted to move relative to the other, in use, for controlling the rate of discharge of material through the gap.

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